MYSTIC
CROSSGEN comics
10
APR
$2.95
$4.50 CAN
www.crossgen.com
Ron Marz
Brandon Peterson
John Dell
Andrew Crossley

HELLO?
HELLO, IS ANYONE HERE? DARROW?
PLEASE, I'M...NOT SURE WHERE I AM.
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE. I'M—
AHH?!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

LET ME GO!
PLEASE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF—
MMPH!

NNNNN...
...YAAAAH!
A DREAM
JUST A DREAM. I'M OKAY. I'M...
...WH-WHAT'S...

Hiya.
SKITTER!
YOU SCARED ME TO DEATH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? HOW DID YOU EVEN GET HERE?
What ELSE would I be doing here? Checking up on you and the poster boy for handsome strangers with hidden agendas.
SO YOU WERE HERE ALL NIGHT? HOW MUCH DID YOU...
Enough.
Enough that I'm even more sure this Darrow guy should have 'ulterior motives' stamped across his forehead in big block letters.
But you can't see it at all, can you? Generally I try not to be the interfering type, let you make your own decisions...
...but it's pretty obvious he's got you wrapped around his finger just like that ring of his.
WHY WOULD YOU EVEN SAY THAT? HE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LESS THAN A GENTLEMAN. HE'S HELPING ME LEARN HOW TO HARNESS MY POWER.
I FEEL... GOOD...WHEN I'M WITH HIM.
Yeah, I'll bet you do.
Believe me, I've seen his type before.
He's smooth, I'll give him that. Has he told you you're perfectly safe with him yet?
NO...
...NO, HE HASN'T.
Just wait.
Listen, he's on his way now, I'm outta here. But we've had this talk before. Maybe you should start listening.

GISELLE?
IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT? I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU CRY OUT.
I DID, BUT...
...I'M FINE NOW, DARROW. I HAD A NIGHTMARE, THAT'S ALL.
NOTHING TOO HARROWING, I HOPE.
IT WAS SO STRANGE. I WAS IN THIS PLACE, I DON'T KNOW WHERE, AND SUDDENLY ALL THESE...TENTACLES, I GUESS...WERE WRAPPING AROUND ME.
IT WAS LIKE THEY WERE GOING TO SQUEEZE THE LIFE FROM ME. I COULDN'T BREATHE, I COULDN'T EVEN SCREAM.
AND THEN I WOKE UP.
NOT A REACTION TO ME, I HOPE.
NO, DON'T BE SILLY.
YOU REALIZE YOU'RE PERFECTLY SAFE HERE WITH ME, YOU DO FEEL THAT, DON'T YOU?

I...DO.
OF COURSE I DO. SORRY, I'M STILL FEELING A LITTLE...*WEIRD*... AFTER THE NIGHTMARE.
UNDERSTANDABLE, CERTAINLY.
CAN I HAVE BREAKFAST BROUGHT UP FOR YOU? COFFEE?
OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO RESUME OUR STUDIES. I REALLY BELIEVE WE WERE MAKING EXCELLENT PROGRESS.
WELL...
...TRUTHFULLY...
...I THINK I SHOULD PROBABLY GO SEE MY SISTER. I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT WAS JUST A MISUNDERSTANDING, BUT I WANT TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT BETWEEN US.
IF THAT'S...
...OKAY?
OF COURSE, GISELLE.
IF THAT'S YOUR PREFERENCE.
I'LL HAVE MOMO BRING THE CAR AROUND WHILE YOU GET READY.

SHE IS UNBOUND!
THE DOOR OF HER PRISON SWINGS WIDE!
ANIMORA BREACHES OUR PLANE IN WHAT WAS *OUR* SANCTUM, BUT THE VILLARD WOMAN'S MACHINATIONS PREVENT US FROM ENTERING IT.
QUICKLY...
...BEFORE SHE DEPARTS OF HER OWN ACCORD...
...WE MUST BRING ANIMORA...
DOOM
...TO US...

WELL.
WHO ARE *YOU* PEOPLE?

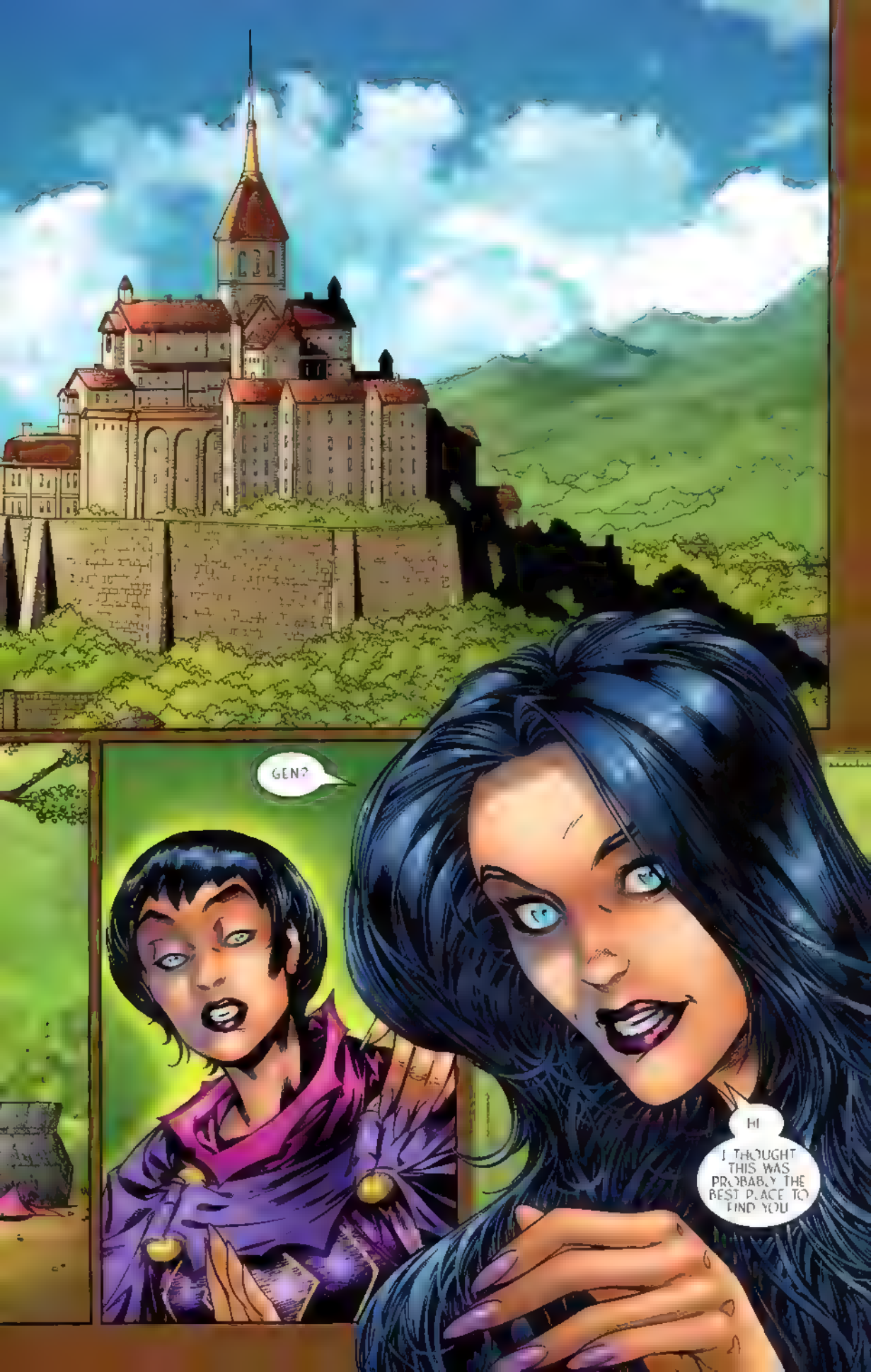
WE WELCOME YOUR RETURN GREAT ANIMORA
WE ARE THE GUILD MASTERS OF CIRESS T S WE WHO HAVE FREED YOU FROM YOUR LONG IMPR SONME-
NNTT!
GUILD MASTERS? GUILD MASTERS SEALED ME INTO THE VOID
WITHOJT LIGHT
WITHOJT SOUND
AND YOU PRESUME TO DEEM YOURSELVES MY SAVIORS?
ALREADY SHE BETRAYS US!
MAGUS!

DON'T, YOU FOOL!
EYAAGH!
GAAAH...
THE REST OF YOU WISH TO SHARE HIS PUNISHMENT?
I THOUGHT NOT
PLEASE
WE ARE NOT THOSE WHO BANISHED YOU. THOSE WERE OUR PREDECESSORS CENTURIES AGO. WE ARE
DIFFERENT
WE HELPED BRING AN END TO YOUR LONG EXILE, AND IN RETURN WISH ONLY TO BARGAIN WITH YOU. PLEASE
HEAR US OUT

TELL ME MORE
WE
WE HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF OUR POWER OUR ETERNAL SPIRITS
THE ESSENCES OF THOSE MASTERS WHO ORIGINALLY BANISHED YOU
HAVE BEEN STOLEN FROM US
THE SPIRITS ARE THE WELL OF KNOWLEDGE FROM WHICH WE DRAW THE BADGES OF OFFICE BY WHICH WE RULE
NOW THEY RESIDE WITHIN A MAGICA, NOVICE A WOMAN CALLED GISELLE VALLARD
WHEN WE ATTEMPTED TO RECLAIM OUR SPIRITS AND WERE REBUFFED I SOUGHT OUT AN ANSWER
YOU
YOU CAN DESTROY HER AND WITH HER DESTRUCTION OUR SPIRITS WILL RETURN TO US
AND?
WHAT IS IT YOU OFFER ME?

OBEDIENCE
THE GUILDS MUST APPEAR TO RULE CIRESS BUT WE OFFER OUR LOYALTY TO *YOU*
WE WILL BE YOUR TOOLS UPON THIS WORLD FROM THE SHADOWS YOU WILL RULE US AND THROUGH US YOU WILL RULE CIRESS
YOU WOULD *GIVE ME* THIS WORLD THE VERY THING YOUR PREDECESSORS FOUGHT TO KEEP
ALL TO PRESERVE THE PRETENSE OF YOUR POSITIONS
PATHETIC
BUT VERY WELL WE HAVE A BARGAIN YOUR SPIRITS
IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR WORLD
NOW

WHERE DO I FIND THIS VILLARD WOMAN?
FINALLY
IT'S FINALLY GOING TO HAPPEN


GEN?
HI
I THOUGHT THIS WAS PROBABLY THE BEST PLACE TO FIND YOU

I'M A LITTLE SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HERE BUT YOU'VE NEVER EXACTLY BEEN A FREQUENT VISITOR TO THE CATHEDRAL
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH
I WASN'T SURE WHEN I'D SEE YOU AGAIN
I CAN IMAGINE WHAT YOU MUST THINK BUT ALL I WAS TRYING TO DO LAST NIGHT WAS LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WELFARE
JUST LIKE I'VE DONE ALL YOUR LIFE
I KNOW
I KNOW YOU WERE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT ME AND I'M SORRY I OVERREACTED AND I SHOULDN'T HAVE YOU THINK WE CAN PUT IT BEHIND US?
SURE
BYGONES, OKAY?
SOMETHING GOOD DID COME OUT OF IT YOU KNOW
DARROW SHOWED ME I COULD ASCEND TO THE SPIRIT PLANE I WAS ACTUALLY FACE TO FACE WITH THE GOOD SPIRITS
GENEVIEVE, I'M PLEASED TO FINALLY MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE OFFICIALLY I'M SORRY WE GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT
BUT I ASSURE YOU I HAVE ONLY THE BEST IN MIND FOR YOUR SISTER
BUT MAYBE WE DID GET OFF TO A BAD START I'M WILLING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE
FOR GISELLE'S SAKE
THIERRY CHEVALIER'S STILL SMARTING FROM YOUR LITTLE OUTBURST HE'S THE ONE WHO DESERVES YOUR APOLOGY

I'M GLAD YOU CAME ELLE I HAVE NEWS
THEY JUST TOLD ME AND I WAS OUT HERE LETTING IT SINK IN
THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT. THE NOUVEAU COUNCIL OF ELDERS IS GOING TO CONFIRM ME AS GUILD MASTER
THE CEREMONY IS TO TAKE PLACE IMMEDIATELY. THE GUILD WANTS TO LOOK DECISIVE POLITICALLY. SO THEY'RE NOT EVEN BOTHERING TO INVITE THE OTHER MASTERS
I'VE WORKED FOR THIS EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER ELLE. IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED
AND NOW IT'S COMING TRUE
I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU GEN
I KNOW. IT'S BEEN CRAZY SINCE YOUR RITE OF ASCENSION WAS DISRUPTED
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYTHING'S FINALLY FALLING INTO PLACE

HEY
YOU!

NO ONE'S SUPPOSED TO BE IN HERE!
BUT YOU'RE NOT LEAVING ME A CHOICE.
WHF!
SUMMON MORE GUARDS!
Oh, BOTHER...
...I DIDN'T WANT IT TO COME TO THIS.
#82
NH!
HE COMMANDS OUR OWN CATHEDRAL AGAINST US!
PERHAPS I'M NEAR ENOUGH NOW...

...THAT IT WON'T MATTER.
SKRASSH
IT'S HER.
SHE'S HERE!
ELLE? ANY IDEA?
NOT A ONE.
OKAY THEN.
WAIT! I MUST...
SPWOOSH

...TALK TO YOU.
MONDRU!
ANY PARTICULAR REASON THE MASTER OF THE ASTRAL GUILD IS SITTING IN A FOUNTAIN?
STALKING ME, PROBABLY.
I AM HERE FOR YOU, GISELLE...
...THOUGH NOT FOR THE REASONS YOU MIGHT SUSPECT.
I CAME TO THE NOUVEAU CATHEDRAL SEARCHING FOR GENEVIEVE IN HOPES SHE COULD LEAD ME TO YOU, GISELLE.
MY APOLOGIES FOR THE SUBTERFUGE, BUT I DIDN'T DARE INVOKE A SPELL OF TELEPORTATION. RELYING ON MAGIC MIGHT ALLOW THEM TO TRACE ME.
THEM BEING THE OTHER MASTERS.
I'VE BROKEN WITH THEM. I CAME TO WARN YOU OF WHAT THEY'VE SET IN MOTION.
THEIR THIRST FOR VENGEANCE HAS DRIVEN THEM TO MADNESS. THEY SOUGHT A WEAPON POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DESTROY GISELLE AND FREE THE SPIRITS...

...AND THEY FOUND ONE.
THEY RELEASED ANIMORA.
YOU...
...YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.
SHE NEARLY DESTROYED THE ENTIRE PLANET ONCE...
...AND THEY'RE SENDING HER AFTER ME?
ANIMORA?